

St. George's Rectory,
Hempstead, Nassau County,
New York.

HABS No. 4-401

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

District No. 4
Southern New York State

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Historic American Buildings Survey
Wm. Dewey Foster, District Officer,
25 West 45th Street, New York City.

St. George's Rectory
Prospect and Greenwich Streets,
Hempstead, Nassau County, N.Y.

St. George's Rectory is located on the southeast corner of Prospect and Greenwich Streets, in Hempstead, Nassau County, Long Island. The entrance to the Rectory faces on Prospect Street.

The Rectory is now being occupied by the Rev. John Sylvanus Haight, rector of St. George's Church.

According to the Church Records, on May 29th, 1792, a meeting of the Church Wardens and Vestry was held. At this meeting the following Resolution was passed:

"Resolved that a new Parsonage be erected next Spring, and that the materials be purchased this season."

According to the book titled Adventures for God, published during 1932, and written by The Rev. Haight:

"The scheme for the new Rectory directed that it should be forty-four feet front, by thirty-four deep with an annex at the east for a kitchen. The cost was to be about \$2500, the Vestry assuming the responsibility of carting the lumber, finding stone and digging the cellar. The new building was regarded to be a wonderful example of architecture. It was constructed largely of hewn-oak timber, given by the parishoners from the north side of the Island. The large attic, with its well-preserved saplings, almost as hard as stone today, serves the double purpose of protecting the bedrooms from chilly blasts of winter, and keeping them cool under the hot Long Island sun.

St. George's Rectory is one of the most picturesque and lovely homes in Hempstead. Surrounded by a white fence and a

thick growth of lilacs, it is hemmed in from the road and bustle of Greenwich and Prospect Streets. As someone has said, it is a small farm in the heart of a growing city. Two stately boxwood trees stand as sentinels at the front door, and in the garden there is a profusion of rose-bushes, which have been planted and tended by the various ministers.

Often when we are caring for the flowers on the west side of the Rectory, we read over again the quaint inscription on the corner-stone -- 'This Parsonage was erected by the voluntary donations of the Episcopal Congregation of North and South Hempstead, Anno Domini, 1793. Unity, Perseverance, and Public Spirit. Lans Des!'

The writer is of the opinion that the "annex at the east" was not erected at the same time as the main house, and that the main house was built first. This opinion is based on the difference in the types of architecture; and the fact that the exterior walls of the main house are covered with shingles, while the walls of the "annex" are covered with beveled siding. There is also evidence of change to be seen in the fireplace opening in the room now called the 'Sitting Room.' It is safe to presume that this was the 'Kitchen' referred to in the original Resolution, before the annex was built.

Judging by present day standards of frame construction, the main house was built with a minimum of timber, for the roof rafters are $5\frac{1}{2}$ " by $5\frac{1}{2}$ " and spaced 4'-0" center to center. From what little evidence appears, there is no wood sheathing or building paper on the outside of the exterior walls of the main house. The shingles are apparently nailed to shingle-laths, and the vertical studding is placed 4'-0" center to center.

Judging from the type of the architecture, it is the opinion of the writer that the two dormer windows on the front of the house were added later, and that the entrance porch on the main house was added later, by many years, than the construction of any other part of the house.

The exterior walls and trim of the house are painted white, while the shutters are a dark olive green.

The main house has a gambrel roof of very pleasing slopes, with a very interesting cornice at the eaves on the front and the rear, the detail of which is rather delicate, when contrasted with the entire mass of the house.

The interior woodwork is painted white, with very little interesting architectural detail, with the exception of the Parlor Mantel, the main stair handrail, balusters and newel post.

According to the Rev. Haight's book, Adventures for God, Peter Cooper came to Hempstead in 1813 as a young man and was married in the Rectory on December 22, 1813. The mantel in the present Dining Room is from the Peter Cooper Homestead, and was presented to the parish in 1928 by Miss Harriet Mulford.

The Rev. Orlando Harriman Jr., father of Edward H. Harriman, the banker and railroad financier, was rector of St. George's Church from 1844 to 1849, and Edward H. Harriman was born in the Rectory. The northeast bedroom on the second floor is preserved as the Harriman guest room.

Written, April 28, 1934, by

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Approved,

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Revised 1936, H.C.F.